

24 February 1959

Comments on "Proposal for the
Rapid Transmittal of Information Reports and Customer Reactions"

Page 3.

Have we defined what information properly acts as necessary immediate background against which we assess those items of intelligence to be handled in the Critic system? This permits a selectiveness which would seem to be needed in the first strivings toward an overall 24-hour goal. Much information collected in the field merely fills chinks in the wall for topics of uncritical interests and is by no means something the Agency Commo's machinery should strain its milk over. To try to get everything back in 24 hours is like treating your baseball batting lineup as though everyone was equipped to be a clean-up hitter.

Page 4.

Concur with pencilled note.

Page 6.

Re pencilled note. My understanding is that part of the volume trouble, and the receipt of reports not desired, is attributable to the DD/P procedure of using quantity of output as a part of its basis for evaluating case officer performance. Pretty useless stuff is turned in, processed and disseminated simply because case officers have to make a show of productivity lest their project be withdrawn and their reputation suffer. The DD/P might make a real contribution to the volume problem if it could determine how to discourage dependence on quantity as a standard for performance ratings and project evaluations.

Page 7.

I think the paper is naive here. It flags a very dead horse, and does not acknowledge that the problem it discusses is an old one, a currently-recognized one, and one which can be remedied only in part, by constant effort. This is why we have St/I's and Requirements.

Page 10.

Line 4. The DD/P system is geared to a rewrite, retype approach.

Pages 18-19.

Contact between the analyst and the collector needs to be bettered through working together, not through an improved form. Agree with pencilled comments.

Pages 20-21.

This would be a helluva opera if applied to very much of the weekly take.

Pages 22-23.

This would seem to ignore the differences in the reasons analysts wish to see documents for information, for background building, for use; and seems to overlook comparative priority needs in person and in time.

Page 24. 1. Lines 5-7.

As I understand the situation, it is very difficult to ascertain to what specific requirement or requirements a report is responsive.

Page 25.

A lot of this paper presumes that the Analyst's reaction is the be-all-and-end-all. It is not. He can be out of date, unversed on the detail reported, misled by faulty information elsewhere, or simply evaluate wrongly. In addition, the analyst often does not have adequate information to reply, with assurance, that a report is credible, complete, or rumor.

Page 26. Second paragraph.

Nothing could better reflect the honor of the present Agency compartmenting than the fact that this paragraph was felt to be needed. I would only say that it is entirely proper that "an initial reaction is sent right back without interference at the Headquarters desk," and that I'm sure the field would be no more likely to act independent of its Washington father in this matter than it is in others presently.

Page 28. Last Sentence.

This doesn't really stand, and it is definitely naive in its suggestion that everything would balance out. Parkinson's Law doesn't work that way.

Page 31.

Last Clause. Why should they?

IRS Form.

This needs editing to rid it of overlaps, gaps, and unreal gradations in available word selections.

Overall.

Much good stuff in this, but as an approach it suffers from the presumption that the system will wrap up the problem. It won't, for its capabilities apply properly to a limited variety of reporting-- taken beyond that point, it becomes complex beyond tolerance. The system should be proposed as a major contribution that resolves one significant area of the problem and not another complete saviour. (universal system) People are the major factors, not their instruments of communication, and so the remedy must always have limited application.

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